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I N S I D E

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Local Milestones

468 students say adios to HJHS

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

The Marianas High School Gymnasium was filled above its capacity last Saturday afternoon when it played host to the Hopwood Junior High School promotion ceremony.

With a loud background sound from hundreds of clapping hands, some 468 students marched to their seats in anticipation of receiving their hard-earned promotion certificate.

The ceremony was well attended, featuring guests rang-

ing from parents, family members, and school officials, to friends, legislators, and Board of Education members.

In her keynote address, Mount Carmel Development director Louise Concepcion urged the students to continue pursuing higher education and to begin looking into potential colleges.

Returning to the island on time to grace the occasion was Public School System commissioner Rita Inos, who, along with BOE chairman Roman Benavente, gave congratulatory remarks.



SHAN SEMAN

A teacher leads the graduating class in singing their farewell song.

Individuals were then presented with Top 10, Board of Education, Commissioner, and Presidential Gold and Silver awards.

Leading the pack of those recognized were Eugene Solomon, valedictorian, and Kenrick Bocago, salutatorian. Solomon was also the recipient of the BOE Award for posting the highest Grade Point Average while Bocago earned the Commissioner's Award after posting the second highest GPA.

"Thank you to the parents and teachers. Your efforts have paid off," said Solomon during his valedictorian address.

Solomon also lauded the fellow graduates for their moral support and efforts during their tenure as junior high school students.

"I am certain we can attain our dreams and our hopes," he told them.

The students then marched to the stage to receive their diplomas.

In his final message as the students' principal, Jim Brewer commended the graduates for their accomplishment.



EUGENE SOLOMON
Valedictorian



KENRICK BOCAGO
Salutatorian

"The success you have achieved was hard won, which makes it all the sweeter for you. What you may not realize is that your success is actually a success for your parents, family, and the entire PSS community, especially those of us at [HJHS]. When we see you achieve, we are rewarded in ways only parents and grandparents can envision. We are proud of your effort and very optimistic about your future," he said.



SHAN SEMAN

The graduating class of the Hopwood Junior High School was a colorful bunch with their island-style wear.

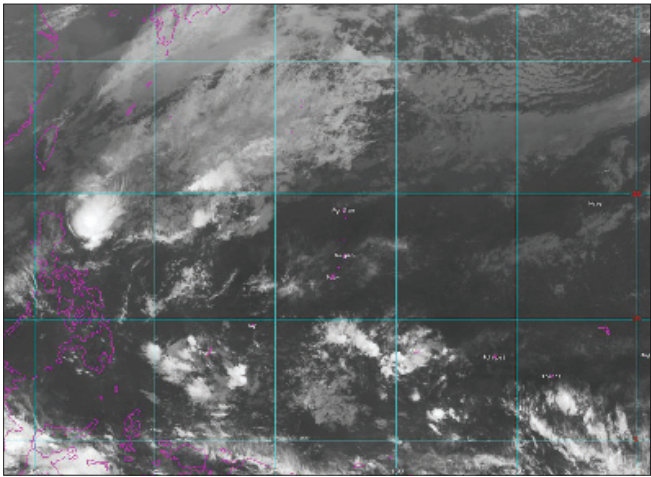
SAIPANCELL
CMYK

CARS UNLIMITED

CENTURY TRAVEL

COMMUNITY *Briefs*

WEATHER FORECAST



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 AM., MARCH 9, 2004
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Fresh to strong trade winds across much of Micronesia converging into lighter winds near the Equator are producing scattered showers between the Equator and 8n from 130e to 153 and between the Equator and 6n from 160e to 180. A cold front stretches from 25n161e to 20n146e and continues as a shear line to 19n130e. Low- and mid-level clouds...light rain and showers associated this feature extend up to 200 miles north of the boundary. Trade wind convergence south of the cold front/shear line is producing low clouds and showers between 12n and 18n from 132e to 150e. This area includes the Mariana Islands.

SAIPAN AND TINIAN
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 15-20 mph. Highs near 87. Lows near 76.

GUAM AND ROTA
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 15-20 mph. Highs near 87. Lows near 76.

PALAU
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15 kt.

POHNPEI
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15 kt.

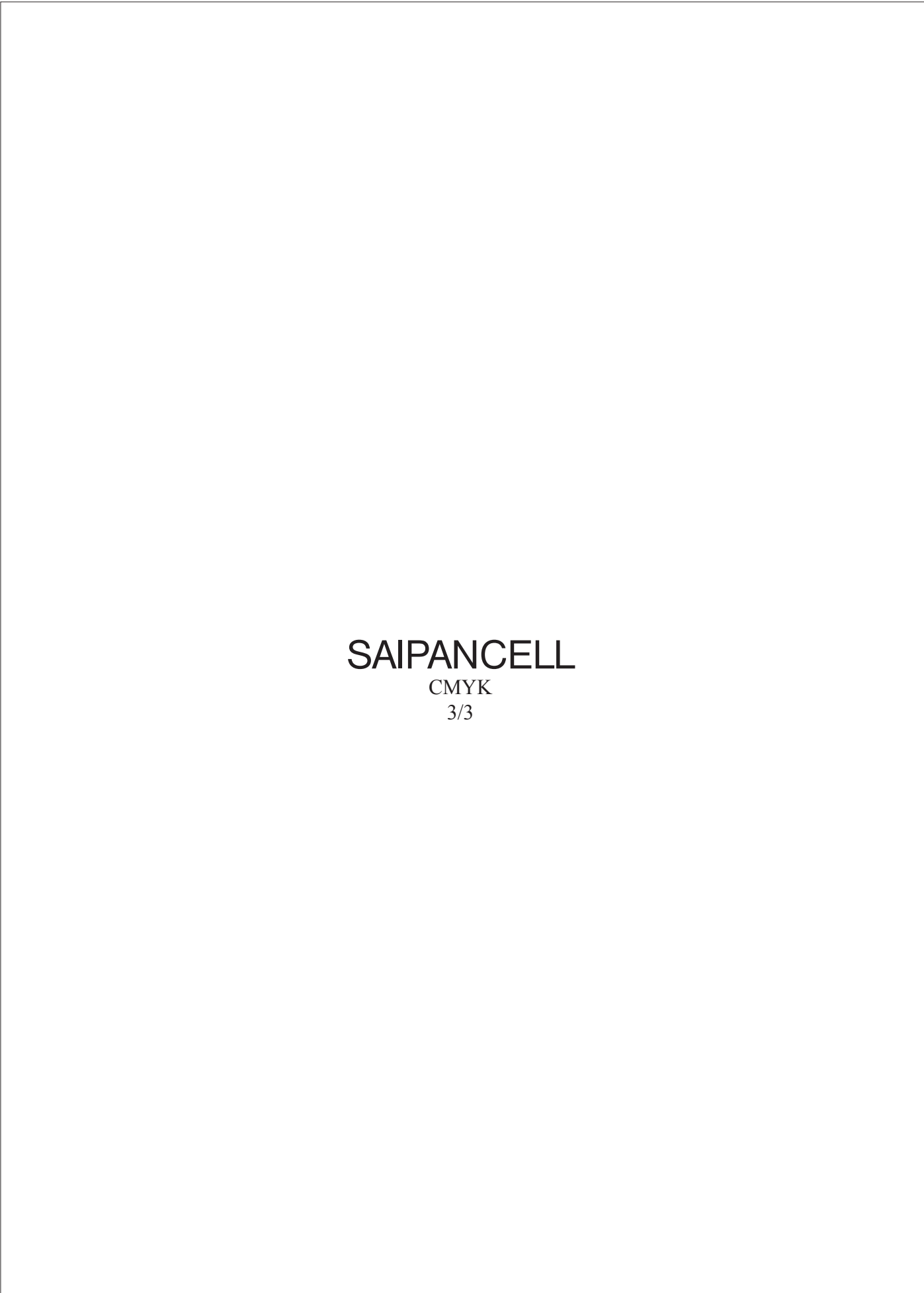
YAP AND ULITHI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15-20 kt.

KOSRAE
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.

CHUUK
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 15-20 kt.

MAJURO
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.
Winds: East at 15-20 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
Auckland	Sunny	71F (22C)	60F (16C)
Beijing	Sunny	65F (18C)	48F (9C)
Hong Kong	Sunny	74F (23C)	61F (16C)
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82F (28C)	68F (20C)
London, England	Sunny	45F (7C)	30F (-1C)
Los Angeles	Sunny	79F (26C)	59F (15C)
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88F (31C)	73F (23C)
Melbourne	Sunny	75F (24C)	59F (15C)
Miami	Partly Cloudy	72F (22C)	54F (12C)
New York City	Cloudy	40F (4C)	34F (1C)
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	37F (3C)	25F (-4C)
Paris	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	25F (-4C)
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	53F (12C)	39F (4C)
Rome	Cloudy	49F (9C)	30F (-1C)
Salem, Oregon	Partly Cloudy	60F (16C)	40F (4C)
San Francisco	Sunny	68F (20C)	52F (11C)
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	47F (8C)	35F (2C)
Tokyo, Japan	Partly Cloudy	42F (6C)	36F (2C)
Washington, DC	Cloudy	45F (7C)	34F (1C)



The war effort



The effort required of the men, materiel and treasure necessary to win the Pacific War was gigantic. There had been nothing like the undertaking in history and there has been nothing like it since. An entire industrial city had to be constructed in Oak Ridge Tennessee to produce an atomic weapon; an aircraft delivery system had to be planned, constructed and delivered; three heavily fortified enemy held islands had to be captured and airfields constructed afterward to accommodate the B-29 aircraft that would carry the war to the Japanese home islands and eventually bring hostilities to an end. All of which represented only a portion of the entire overall war effort carried out in the Pacific and elsewhere in the world between December 7, 1941 and September 2, 1945.

Development of The A Bomb

Some 7,300 miles east of the Mariana Islands, a plant had been constructed at Oak Ridge, Tennessee in early 1943 for the manufacture of materials for the atomic bombs that would be launched from an island in the Marianas. This huge effort involved 200 prime contractors; 200 million board feet of lumber; 400,000 cubic yards of concrete; 100,000 tons of steel; 750 buildings; 30,000 bachelor quarters; 15,000 family housing units; 55,000 carloads of material and equipment and 12,000 pieces of construction equipment in use at the same time.

The main building was over a mile long. The facility's steam power plant generated 238,000 kilowatts and its three boilers produced 750,000 pounds of steam per hour. Fifty railroad cars were required each day to fuel the plant's boilers. The cost of the Manhattan Project as it was secretly known was \$20 billion (through August 1945).

The product of this herculean effort, the first atomic bomb, was assembled at Los Alamos and detonated at Alamagordo, New Mexico on July 16, 1945. Code named "Trinity", the detonation was a weapons proof shot in preparation for its future use on Japan.

The Construction of Air Fields

The construction of the airfields on Tinian was the largest building activity the United States Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees) had ever undertaken up to that time. They built 6 huge bomber strips, each a mile and one-half long and a block wide, along with eleven miles of taxi ways with "hardstands" sufficient to park 300 aircraft.



Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets, who piloted the B-29 bomber Enola Gay on its historic mission to drop the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, signs copies of his 1998 book, "Return of the Enola Gay," on Thursday, June 10, 2004, at the decommissioned Battleship Missouri in Honolulu. In front is a model of the bomb that was dropped.

The Seabees dug, blasted, scraped and moved eleven million cubic yards of earth and coral on Tinian. This quantity of material would fill a line of dump trucks 900 miles long. Piled on a city block, the earth and coral they moved could form a pyramid two-thirds of a mile in height. Their equipment was kept busy 20 hours a day while welding crews worked to repair bulldozers, shovels and trucks damaged as a result of the rough construction activity. One Seabee had a Marine tank team fire armor-piercing shells into the side of a hill so dynamite charges could be placed to break up the coral. The 15,000 Seabees on Tinian operated equipment and constructed facilities of all types. They operated a wide assortment of cranes and other equipment including asphalt plants to pave the airstrips. In addition to the airfields they built Quonset huts and other service buildings. Every airstrip was completed on time and none required more than 53 days to build.

The Seabee's motto, "We Build, We Fight" and their "Can Do Spirit" distinguished this group as being able to do any kind of



VERIZON 611
CMYK

By WILLIAM H. STEWART
Military Historical Cartographer



work, any place, under any conditions. The efforts of the 6th and 107th Construction Brigades were remarkable.

Many Seabee groups would "adopt" an aircraft and when they did so the quality of life for the crew of the plane improved considerably as the Seabees provided the crew of "their" Super fortress with better Quonset huts, washing machines, better mattresses, ice cream and other comforts of life.

The men, equipment and construction material sent to this one island required a degree of logistical support almost beyond comprehension, all of which had to be planned, coordinated, assembled and safely transported across the Pacific in hundreds of ships.

By 1945 the airfields on Tinian were among the busiest in the world.

The B-29 Delivery

A delivery system was needed and by 1944 the United States had produced a long range bomber that had the capability of flying the round-trip distance from the Mariana Islands to the Japanese home islands. In June 1944 the islands were assaulted by U. S. forces for the purpose of obtaining airfields from which to launch the new B-29 Super fortresses against Japan. Once the islands were secure airfields were constructed on Guam, Saipan and Tinian to accommodate the aircraft which had a range of 3,700 miles at 33,600 feet. Built at a cost of \$639,000 each 3,970 were constructed.

The Enola Gay lifted off Tinian at 2:45 a. m., August 6, 1945 for the six and one half hour flight to Hiroshima. At 30,700 feet, with a ground speed of 328 m.p.h., a bomb weighing 9,000 pounds, measuring 129 inches in length, with a diameter of 31.5 inches, containing less than 50 pounds of Uranium 235 was released and split into two sections. After falling to an altitude of 1,890 feet, nuclear fission began in one fifteen-hundredth of a micro-second. The firebomb that erupted was the equivalent of thirteen thousand tons of T.N.T. and thousands of degrees hotter than the surface of the sun. It melted granite and vaporized people leaving only their shadows on the few remaining buildings left standing in the city after the blast. This single bomb left 118,661 dead, 30,524 severely injured, 48,606 slightly injured and 3,677 missing. It exploded with the temperature of the fireball at the outer edge reaching 1,800 degrees centigrade 15 milliseconds after the explosion, with the velocity of the shock at 100 meters per second one thousand meters from the epicenter. When released over the city the temperature at the instant of the detonation reached several million degrees. A few millionths of a second later the surrounding air reached the point of white hot heat and in 1/10,000 of a second an immense fireball was formed with a uniform temperature of about 300,000 degrees. In less than one minute the atomic cloud had reached a height of more than one half mile. At the hypocenter, iron melted. Within 900 hundred feet of the hypocenter the surface of granite melted. Within one mile, railroad ties, fences and trees ignited spontaneously. The heavy black clay tiles which were an almost universal feature of the roofs of Japanese houses bubbled from the heat at distances up to a mile from the epicenter. The fireball as seen from a distance of five and one half miles from the point of burst had a luminosity ten times that of the sun.

On August 9th, a second bomb, code named "Fat Man", which was a plutonium device and carried by the B-29, Bock's Car, had as its primary target the city of Kokura but bad weather forced the pilot to the alternate target of Nagasaki.

It was this second device detonated over Nagasaki that finally convinced the Japanese that the war was lost and surrender followed on August 15, 1945. The formal ceremonies aboard the Battleship U. S. S. Missouri occurred on September 2, 1945 in Tokyo Bay.

After the war the U. S. undertook a strategic bombing survey of Japanese cities. It was estimated that the damage and casualties caused at Hiroshima by one atomic bomb dropped from a single aircraft would have required 220 B-29's carrying 1,200 tons of incendiary bombs, 400 tons of high-explosive bombs and 500 tons of anti-personnel fragmentation bombs—if conventional weapons—rather than an atomic bomb had been used.

There has been much discussion as to whether it was necessary to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. The attacks did convince a recalcitrant Japanese military to abide by the decision of the Emperor to accept the nation's unconditional surrender. No one knows the number of American and Japanese lives saved as a result of the conclusion of hostilities. It was estimated that one million American lives might have been lost had it become necessary to invade Japan. It is believed by many that the Japanese would have fought on to the last man, women and child and that Japanese civilization would be lost forever. The lives sacrificed

See THE WAR on Page 7



LA filmmaker here to film ‘Pied Piper’ docu

By **SHAN SEMAN**
REPORTER

Of the many stories tied to the World War II battles on Saipan, one of the more notable ones were that of the “Pied Piper of Saipan,” Guy Gabaldon, a member of the 2nd Marine Division known for single-handedly capturing about 1,500 Japanese prisoners during the war.

Currently on island to shoot a feature length documentary on Gabaldon’s feat is Los Angeles filmmaker Steve Rubin, who said in an interview yesterday that the film will be based on Gabaldon’s exploits in the Marines as well as his life before and after WWII.

“It’s a story of Guy...a true story, not a ‘Hollywoodized’ version,” he said. “I’m taking such an ironic angle on this documentary. It’s about a man who came to Saipan to kill, as most Marines were taught, and in the process, ended up saving thousands of people’s lives. It’s about a man who had great humanity at a time when people were killing each other in huge numbers...he managed to convinced some rather fanatical Japanese to surrender. Never in the history of the war did one man capture

so many people at once. I think it’s a fascinating story.”

Rubin said the film will be called Pied Piper of Saipan, and is expected to have a running length of 90 minutes.

Rubin, who produced the movie Silent Night starring Linda Hamilton for Hallmark Entertainment in 2002, disclosed that other angles include the era itself and how it may have affected Gabaldon’s heroic acts.

“The other angles I’ll be pursuing are that maybe there was some racism involved in the military at that time that he did not get the Medal of Honor when he deserved it,” he said. “I think there was prejudice in his own outfits...some of the men weren’t comfortable being around a man who was Hispanic.”

An earlier film on the Gabaldon story was released in 1960, Hell to Eternity. Rubin, however, said many interesting aspects were not told and that he intends to reveal them.

“There were a lot of things including Gabaldon being shot, and that’s just one of the interesting facets of the story that I find worth discussing.”

Rubin expressed his passion for historical pieces and has written various books including Combat Films, a story on the

making of WWII movies.

It was then that he gained interest on Gabaldon.

“During research of the book, I interviewed a screenwriter of the Hell to Eternity movie and learned about Gabaldon. Then, at a location expo five years ago that featured various communities promoting filming in their area, I came upon the Northern Marianas booth, introduced myself and left my business card. Next thing you know, Guy called me on the phone.”

The project concerning Gabaldon’s story, however, had to wait a couple of years as Gabaldon’s rights were, at the time, controlled by another producer.

At the end of their contract, Gabaldon and Rubin began initiating

the start of their new project.

“We’d like to get a movie going, but the documentary is more pressing because I think it will popularize the story not only of Guy, but also of the Saipan campaign to people who don’t know anything about it. So far, the response I’m getting is very positive...people want to know the story.”

During his stay on island, Rubin said he already shot footage of Gabaldon’s sons—Yosh and Tony—at Banzai Cliff, and has also conducted a film interview with former Rep. Herman Palacios, a friend of Gabaldon.

At the end of the interview, Rubin extended his appreciation to the Northern Marianas College film crew with whom

he is currently working with.

“These guys are terrific,” he said. “They are as professional as crews I get in L.A., and I would like to work with them again. I saw the footage and they were good, so we’re all pretty happy about that.”

The crew comprises NMC students involved in an extensive summer film program put together by the NMC Film and Television Arts department and the Workforce Investment Agency, in collaboration with Talk Story Studios.

“I would also like to extend my appreciation to the tourism board here for helping me, and to all the people who made it possible for me to come here, especially Jerry Facey and

the committee for the 60th... They’ve been so cooperative.”

For his WWII heroics, Gabaldon was recommended for the Medal of Honor by his commanding officer, Capt. John Schwabe, now a retired colonel. The Marine Corps, however, initially downgraded the award to a Silver Star and only upgraded it to the Navy Cross—one medal lower than the Medal of Honor—just as the 1960 movie was released.

Rubin is asking anyone with stories about Gabaldon to contact him or leave a message for him at the Media Center located in the Victoria Hotel across from the American Memorial Park. He is scheduled to leave the island this Thursday, June 17.

THE WAR

From Page 6

in those two cities may have, in a strange, obscene twist of fate, saved the world as it provided human beings with undisputed evidence of the horror of a future nuclear conflict and is the only experience mankind has had with the dreadful terror of “doomsday.” It provided a macabre and appalling reference point where there was none before. The lessons learned in

August 1945 kept the world from a nuclear holocaust during the Cold War confrontations for almost one half century following the conclusion of hostilities. One prays that the lives lost were not in vain and in God’s infinite wisdom their sacrifice brought some sanity to the world that such terrifying weapons never again be used.

Today, Tinian holds the somber distinction of forever being linked with the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

LOTTERY

KELLYS PLACE
CMYK

PATIENCE

From Page 7

Large caps may fare best as rates rise

By MEG RICHARDS
AP BUSINESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Interest rates are definitely on the way up, and hawkish remarks from Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan have some on Wall Street thinking they might keep climbing for some time.

If you’re wondering how to protect your portfolio from the market declines usually associated with rising rates, you could take a hint from the past: Large and midcap companies have fared better than small caps, and growth seems to have an edge over value. Information technology and health care have been top performers, while telecom and utilities have fallen out of favor.

“It’s logical that the sectors and companies that are heavily indebted would be hurt by rising rates, because the cost of their capital will go up,” said Sandy Lincoln, chief executive of Wayne Hummer Asset Management.

Utilities, telecommunication business, and some large-cap value stocks, such as automotive companies, tend to make heavy use of the debt markets, Lincoln said. Rising borrowing costs combined with the slower growth associated with value stocks can seriously dent earnings. Smaller companies are also vulnerable, as they often rely on debt to push their businesses forward.

While it’s not gospel, “history is a good guide,” said Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist for U.S. equity research with Standard & Poor’s.

There have been six periods since 1970 when the central bank tightened rates multiple times over a period of many months. On average, in the six months following the first rate hike, the Standard & Poor’s 500 fell 5 percent, nine of the 10 sectors in the index posted declines and all but one of the 56 industries in existence for all six periods fell.

From a style standpoint, the growth group fell an average of 3 percent during the first six months of rate tightening, while value dropped 5 percent.

The hardest-hit sectors were interest rate sensitive financials, which tumbled an average 13 percent; industrials sank 12 percent; consumer discretionary stocks fell 11 percent; and utilities lost 10 percent.

Not surprisingly, health care, energy, consumer staples and materials—things that people use regardless of the economic climate—endured less daunting losses. But the only sector that saw an average gain was tech, thanks to a 6 percent overall advance in electronic instruments.

It’s probably dangerous to extrapolate too much from that, as the tech sector has changed vastly over the last three decades, growing from just three industry groups in 1970 to 15 today. But there’s good reason to think tech stocks could do well in the current climate, as long as their valuations are not too stretched, Stovall said. For companies hoping to

maintain high productivity levels, investing in technology is cheaper than hiring more workers.

Rising rates cause the equity markets to suffer in three ways. Higher interest rates increase

borrowing costs, which are a drag on corporate profits. Investor enthusiasm for stocks

declines as bonds become a more attractive substitute. And ultimately, stock values fall,

because rate hikes force the market to discount future earnings and cash flow.

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EDITORIAL

Too slow on nukes

The Group of Eight industrialized nations took a couple of steps at their summit meeting in Georgia this week to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Urged on by the Bush administration, the leaders of Europe, Japan, Canada and Russia agreed to a one-year moratorium on supplying equipment for producing fissile material to countries that do not already have it. President Bush seeks a permanent ban, which will be discussed in the coming months. The G-8 also announced seven new participants in its program for funding the securing of nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union and agreed to press more non-nuclear countries to accept expanded inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The various initiatives followed several recent steps by the Bush administration—including a new \$450 million program to collect enriched uranium and plutonium from 40 countries around the world—that have added momentum to its efforts to prevent the spread of nukes to nations or terrorist groups.

This progress nevertheless looks paltry in comparison with recent developments in the opposite direction. Both North Korea and Iran appear to be continuing with nuclear weapons development, overcoming ineffective containment efforts by the Bush administration and oft-divided groups of its allies. Next week the IAEA board will meet to consider a report that a formal Iranian commitment to freeze work on enriching uranium was never honored. It's not clear that all the nuclear equipment secretly produced and traded by the Pakistan-based network of Abdul Qadeer Khan has been tracked down: Some seems to have disappeared. Evidence has emerged, meanwhile, that North Korea already has exported nuclear technology, to Libya. Though Libya is dismantling its program, there is an obvious danger that North Korea will sell bombs or the technology for them to others. It's easy to fault the ineffective strategies for these threats pursued by the Bush administration or, in the case of Iran, by European governments. But it's also unclear whether any approach, from negotiation to military action, would succeed—though the effort at containment must go on.

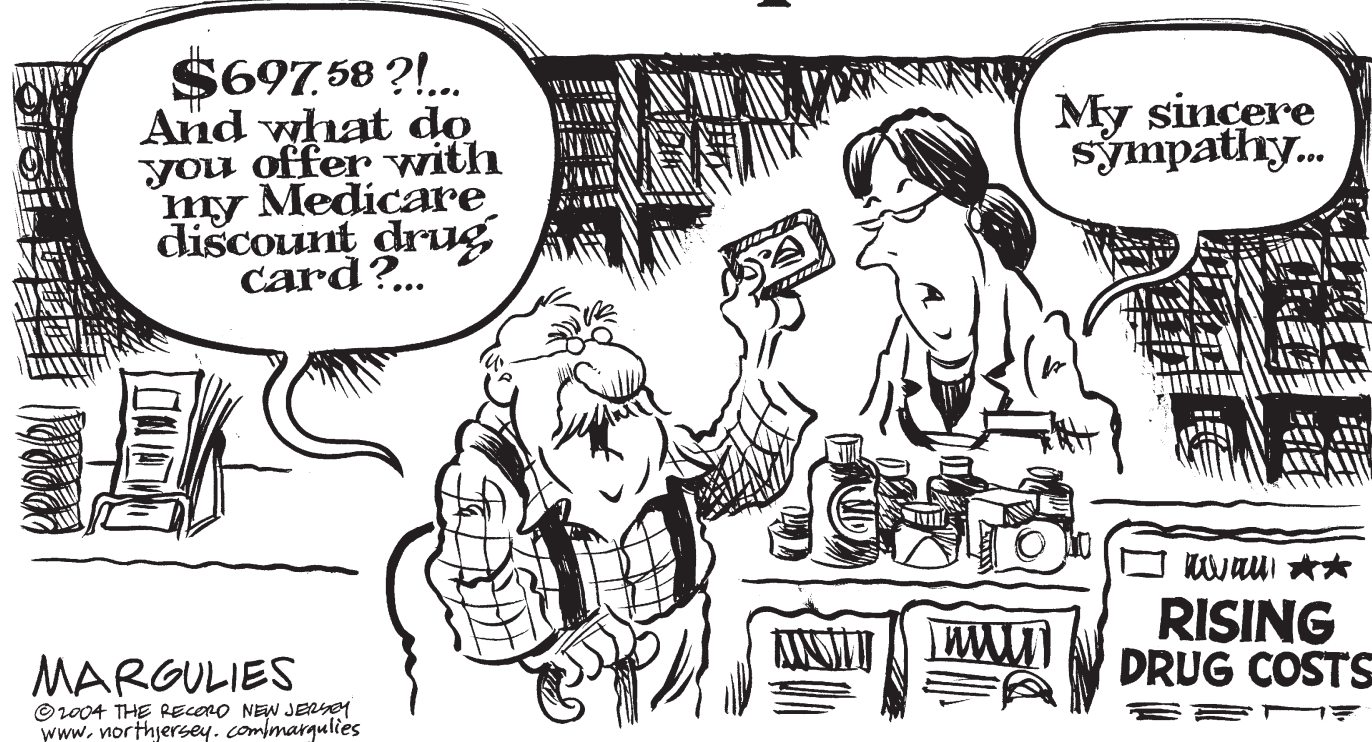
What's odd in such circumstances is the relative sluggishness with which the world has attacked the part of the nuclear menace that is relatively easier to deal with, if equally frightening: that of "loose nukes" and the materials needed to make them. All the elements needed to manufacture a nuclear weapon are readily available in global markets, save the fissile core of highly enriched uranium or plutonium—and hundreds of tons of these materials are stored under insecure conditions in the nations of the former Soviet Union and other countries. A decade-old U.S. program has safeguarded only 20 percent of the material in Russia and less than that elsewhere. According to a recent report by a team of Harvard University researchers, less fissile material was secured in the two years after Sept. 11, 2001, than in the two years before the attacks.

Though it is working harder at securing the loose nukes, the Bush administration is still giving this effort a fraction of the resources it is spending to deploy a missile defense system against a threat—a rogue state with an intercontinental missile—that does not currently exist. At the current rate of work, it will take 13 years to secure the remaining bomb-grade material in the former Soviet Union and more than a decade to collect it from other countries. Bush's challenger, Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., has laid out a plan to complete the same job within four years. The president could help his own political cause as well as U.S. security by matching that commitment.

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Opinion

Prescriptions



Thank you

By JOHN "JP" PANGELINAN

Beginning last Saturday, the CNMI began its weeklong celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian, with most of the major commemorative events taking place this week. The steering committee behind this event has come up with a truly impressive lineup of activities that would surely do our heroes—the veterans—proud. Because all of these—the USO-style show, the parades, the unveiling of memorials, the attendant ceremonies—all boil down to one thing: our simple expression of thanks and gratitude toward the veterans of that war, the likes of which some of us could only vaguely remember and most would never truly understand or imagine. Let me borrow then from this spirit of gratitude to say my thanks.

To the veterans of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian, and to all the American veterans of World War II, thank you. Small words indeed when seen against the colossal sacrifices made by that generation but nevertheless, thank you. If for nothing else, those sacrifices taught these islands the horrors of war, engendering a love for peace that has endured since then. That pacific nature has become the bastion by which the CNMI is known for, transforming these sleepy islands into a paradise for tourists who come to these parts of the world to bask in the sun, frolic on the sand and surf, and ponder on distant memories and echoes of a bloody past.

To the Japanese people, former enemies and now staunch allies, the world has become a much safer place when you renounced your martial past and embraced the tenets of peace, enshrining the ideals of pacifism in your post-war Constitution. For this we thank you. The trouble that must be borne fell on you, becoming the first nation in the world to learn what has never been taught before—the effects of nuclear war—and teaching the world in turn to abhor war in all its forms.

To the steering committee of the 60th commemoration of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian led by Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, thank you. The efforts you all have spent into putting up a truly remarkable series of events to mark this week's occasion deserve kudos. To be sure, not everyone will be happy with the choices you made but the work, collaboration, and intensity of preparations for what would be a noteworthy week is already an achievement in itself. It was a daunting task to begin with, one that involved months

of preparations and meetings, endless discussions, a mind-numbing task of sifting through all the possible events that should be featured, and coordinating with hundreds of people to pull these things off. It is a feat worthy of gratitude.

A special thank you goes out to Dr. Barbara Moir and the CNMI Museum of History and Culture. Dr. Moir, together with the museum's board, kindly allowed the Saipan Tribune to participate in its small way in the 60th commemoration events by featuring on our newspaper "Personal Histories of World War II in the Marianas." These personal histories, appearing every Saturday since May, have enabled our readers to get a glimpse of what happened on these islands 60 years ago. Nothing brings home the horrors of war more than an individual's personal recollections of its tragedies and it is hoped that these series of articles have enabled today's generations to at least get some measure of what the past generation went through.

Another person who deserve out thanks and plaudits is forensic economist and military historical cartographer William H. "Bill" Stewart, who, of his own volition, has contributed several articles to the Saipan Tribune on World War II events, particularly as they relate to the CNMI. His well-researched stories give vivid glimpses of the war and its aftermath, giving depth to dry historical facts and painting a colorful canvas of life before, during, and after the war. Watch out for his stories as they will continue to be featured on this paper until the end of the celebrations.

I would also like to thank Juan "Pan" Guerrero for contributing articles to the paper, as well as Marie Castro for allowing us the use of her book "A Stone's Throw From Tokyo," from which we used some pictures showing the 101st Battalion SEABEES in action after the Battles of Saipan and Tinian.

Lastly, my gratitude goes out to all those people—veterans and civilians alike—who have made themselves available to reporters of this newspaper for their wartime lives to be featured as part of a series of personal recollections of the war. The memories are sure to be painful yet these people have opened themselves up unselfishly to pass on bits and pieces of their past so that future generations will never forget. And by not forgetting, they will avoid the curse of reliving the past.

The writer is the publisher of the Saipan Tribune.

Surrendering to spam

By **CRAIG WINNEKER**

Special to The Washington Post

Here's my "Reply All" to e-mail spammers: I surrender.

No, I haven't finally broken down and paid good money in the hopes of obtaining "amaz.ing price:s on pop.ular soft,war.e" or even "a bu'ly p0l-e". Nor have I forged a long-term financial relationship with a down-on-her-luck Nigerian princess.

Rather, I have given in to the mysterious wisdom of it all. I've become mesmerized by the unintentional elegance of the language of spam. It's as if some marketing matrix has been disseminating pure but encoded poetry, and suddenly, like Keanu Reeves's Neo, I can see it all so clearly. I realize now that I can't do anything about the hundreds of breathless—and, in most cases, shameless—come-ons cramming my e-mail inbox every morning. But suddenly, I no longer want to. Powerless against the barrage, I've decided to treat it as the art I now understand it to be. Bear with me as I attempt to deconstruct.

Many of the mailings seem to follow a pattern: a strange, randomly generated name in the "From" line ("Clarissa Cortes," "Damien Foote," "Debbie Butts") followed by something innocuous in the "Subject" line ("your account," "re: approved," "he is your brother in the video inequitable"). Then comes a message that starts with a few words of gibberish to throw off filters looking for spam keywords. And finally the sales pitch, hawking those all-too-familiar, totally unwanted products: diplomas, discount pharmaceuticals, physical enhancements of every conceivable (and occasionally, I must admit, inconceivable) type, home mortgages, etc.—often all from the same vendor.

The sales pitches themselves are expendable, but everything else in these messages fascinates me. I'm hooked on the accouterments, the anti-spam countermeasures. They are not only wildly creative, they are downright erudite. More than one has sent me scurrying to the reference shelf (or at least AskJeeves.com). The text of one recent mailing begins: "They are eloquent who can speak low things acutely, and of great things with dignity, and of moderate things with temper. The little trouble in the world that is not due to love is due to friendship."

Yes, the first part is a quote from Cicero, but after extensive searching, I've decided that the second part—despite the patina of philosophical authority—is the matrix's own creation. Please don't e-mail me if you know differently.

Quotations of all kinds, always unattributed, make their way into these messages. When French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss said that "Language is a form of human reason, which has its internal logic of which man knows nothing," little did he know that his words would be used to pitch "cheep vi@gr@."

And even though a certain spammer didn't tell me, I now know, thanks to Google, that Luther Burbank said this: "If we had paid no more attention to our plants than we have to our children, we would now be living in a jungle of weed." But I don't think the eminent horticulturist went on to say what my spammer did: "Which side of the bed did you get out of this morning, then? :)))" It's all supposedly in the effort to sell me something that promises to increase my "circumference." Instead, it's blowing my mind.

As for those randomly generated names, I'm captivated by them. Sometimes they're actually believable, and even have a certain ring to them. "Concepcion Quinones" sounds like an MSNBC anchorperson—but a cool one, of course. Other times, though, the marketing matrix can outwit itself. How else to explain "Mohammad McLaughlin"?

I've also noticed that the names almost always have a middle initial. Take the wonderfully monikered Ameslan G. Oversaw, for example. I have him (her?) to thank for this elegant spam haiku: "Geronimo!/Nothing is so dangerous as an ignorant friend/Low rates on Software."

There is also Thriest H. Frosting, who offers "Quality and cheap meds here, Cwinneker," and even Inflicting H. Conversions, who sent me the following message/challenge: "Ciao, baby! :) The first day one is a guest, the second a burden, and the third a pest. What has become clear to you since we last met?" (It doesn't surprise me that 'H' is so commonly chosen to punctuate these names—wasn't it also Jesus's middle initial?)

In another message, the word generator seemed to have spiraled out of control, producing a DeLillo-esque cascade of consonants: "cheeky flaxen cowboy guano fuchs gallery durance assumption apothegm commission clove gave chromium haney burlington pagoda halite denny rowdy itinerary saccade significant eastland corrigible emerald." It gets better every time I read it.

Oops, my Microsoft Outlook's little piano doink informs me that I have some incoming spam. This e-mail just might be the most eloquent of all. It says, simply:

"wrinkle disappearance. yo."

Cicero couldn't have said it better.

Winneker is a writer living in Brussels, where spam is sometimes called pate.

Saipan aflame

An admixture of personae descend on Saipan and Tinian this week, some to commemorate the 60th year anniversary of the Battle of Saipan and Tinian. Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets of the Enola Gay fame keynotes the festivities this Tuesday at the American Memorial Park.

One of the lasting images that dominates historical accounts of the conquest of Pacific Islands defended by the Imperial armed forces of Japan 60 years ago is that of a flame thrower ferreting ensconced soldiers out of the cave crevices and their fox holes. As determined defenders made their stand to the last bullet, equally determined young soldiers ferociously explode ordnance in and around their locations. Blood-drenched real estate was won inch by inch from Guadalcanal to Iwo Jima. In Saipan, some 3,000 Americans, 30,000 Japanese and 900 local residents perished in the invasion.

The heat of such conflagration that visited the islands of Saipan and Tinian would be transported on two mega-ordnances a year later over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those two events would become the twin towers that would indelibly remind us of humanity's capacity to destroy itself.

Young families from Japan, Korea and China has since become regular visitors of our shores. Their members are also present in noticeable abundance this week but they will be here not to recall the conflagration of the past. They are here partly to view the radiating splendor of the island's flame trees.

Japan has its cherry blossoms in April. Saipan has its flame trees in May, and June, and July, and August. We keep the pictures of the flame throwers to remind us that their more sophisticated cousins remain in use in such places as Afghanistan and Iraq, and in selected terrorist targets around the world. We dare not forget the lesson of history where the economies that live on the creation and marketing of such ordnance reap the consequences of their own invention. It was declared of old: those who live by the sword die by the sword.

For now, let the echoes of slaughter recede in the dim chambers of historical memory, and let the laughter of new couples and their dreams of new families resonate under the blossom of the resplendent flame trees in our yards and promenades.

Another flame burns in the hearts and minds of many these days. It is the flame born out of the understanding and experience of a new Earth, a new beginning. Loyalties and allegiances have since transcended the confines of national boundaries as our lives are continually affected and determined by decisions made in many corners of the new global village.

During this week's celebration, on Tuesday morning, June 15, at 9:00 a.m., an ecumenical gathering, an Interfaith Memorial Service, assembles to dedicate all the lives lost during the conflagration in Saipan and Tinian 60 years ago.

To those who find themselves challenged by the vision of a new earth and guided by a mission to create a new social order less guided by the requirements of power and dominance but by the

Left bias is all right by us

On a fairly regular basis, newspapers are accused of acting in concert to slant their coverage of President Bush.

This is, of course, true.

Although newspapers generally act independently, when it comes to Bush they take great pains to always be on the same page.

Here is an inside look at how the process works at a typical newspaper:

First thing every morning, the top editors meet to discuss how the paper will be unfair and negative toward the president in the next day's paper.

This anti-Bush meeting is nicknamed "Get Shorty," and is presided over by the Skew Editor, who is generally, but not always, the most rabid Bush hater on the staff.

After a general plan of attack is agreed upon, the Skew Editor communicates with his counterparts at other newspapers to make sure everyone has their distortions straight.

While this is occurring, political editors at individual newspapers are meeting with their staffs to assign stories, and fill them in on the tone and content of their reporting.

These meetings can get pretty heated, particularly when a reporter feels the chosen direction of a story could come across as being even-handed.

It might be good to digress here for just a second to discuss how a reporter becomes a political writer.

Essentially, it is a fairly straightforward career path. Whenever an opening for a political writer comes up, the most liberal journalist in the pool of applicants is given the job.

As you may well imagine, paring down the list is extremely

By **JAIME VERGARA**

Vergara is a Social Studies 6th grade teacher at San Vicente Elementary School and writes a regular column for the Saipan Tribune.



possibilities of cooperation and community, I offer the following song. The tune, intentionally chosen from the voice of a young Brown shirt in Nazi Germany depicted in the movie, *Cabaret*, is given a new twist by shifting the allegiance from narrow interest to that of humanity as a whole.

The Earth Belongs to All
(Tune: The Future Belongs to All)

*The flowers in Death Valley are greeting the sun;
the rainbow in Tinian stands tall.
We gather together to live as one:
the earth belongs to all.*

*Chorus:
All of the gifts of the earth
and all decisions of history,
and all the inventions of humanness
belong to each one through me.*

*The pole of the bamboo is leafy and green;
the mangoes are ready to fall.
But somehow a glory awaits unseen:
the earth rejoices for all.*

*The cries of the innocent echoes their pain,
the tyrants still vanquish the small.
A powerful ruler lies bound in chain:
Oh, earth, we belong to all.*

*A dream of the future is beckoning me,
a vision has captured my soul.
The morning is coming when all will see:
Our earth belongs to all.*

*Oh Father, Oh Mother, Mysterious Power,
your children are gathered to call;
may this be our mission to haste the hour
when dear earth belongs to all.*

BY **JIM SHEA**

The Hartford Courant

Shea is a columnist for The Courant.



difficult given the left-of-communism leanings of pretty much all journalists.

Occasionally, the job of political writer will go to a reporter who has views that might be considered moderate or mainstream, but these people never last.

Conservatives are also excluded, unless they are so far to the right politically that they come across as wacko, in which case they are usually made op-ed columnists.

Anyway, after the political writers and editors get done molding stories to fit their preconceived notions, copies are faxed to the Democratic National Committee and the Kerry campaign for final tweaking.

The stories then go to the copy desk, where the headlines are written.

A word about copy editors:

Copy editors who handle political stories are mainly selected on their ability to qualify headlines. This talent is important in the event that there is positive news about Bush that cannot be buried deep inside the paper. You have no doubt seen their work:

500,000 Jobs Created in May, but a Guy in Ohio Is Still Out of Work.

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CHINA'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Nation

Nichols' conversion
may have saved him

By TIM TALLEY
AP WRITER

McALESTER, Okla. (AP)—Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols may have been spared the death penalty for a second time because a jailhouse conversion to Christianity gained him sympathy from the jury, lawyers in the case said Saturday.

The state prosecution, staged in an attempt to secure the death penalty at a cost expected to soar to \$10 million, ended with the same sentence Nichols received in federal court six years ago: life.

Juror Daniel Cochran said as many as eight of the 12 jurors

agreed to impose a death sentence, but declined to disclose further details of their deliberations.

"We all agreed that what went on in the jury room would stay in the jury room," he said.

But lawyers for both the prosecution and defense agreed jurors

were influenced by Nichols' religious conversion. Nichols was also portrayed as susceptible to manipulation by Timothy McVeigh, the bombing's mastermind.

During the sentencing portion of his trial, defense witnesses testified that Nichols had worn out four Bibles through prayer and research, and that he wrote an 83-page letter to a prayer partner in Michigan while trying to make a point about Christian faith.

"Terry Nichols' belief in God is so firm that he believes if the rapture occurred today he is going to heaven," defense attorney Creekmore Wallace told jurors.

After convicting him of 161 counts of murder in just 5 hours, the jury wrestled with his punishment for 19 1/2 hours before concluding they could not agree on a penalty.

The deadlock means that Nichols will automatically be sentenced to life in prison for the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, the worst act of domestic terrorism in U.S. history.

He received the same sentence on federal convictions for the deaths of eight federal law enforcement officers in 1998. That jury deadlocked after 13 1/2 hours of deliberation.



Nichols

Reagan entombed at hilltop library

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ronald Reagan's body was sealed inside a tomb Saturday at his hilltop presidential library following a week of mourning and remembrance by world leaders and regular Americans.

Workers closed the underground crypt shortly before 3 a.m. while a handful of Secret Service agents, library personnel and mortuary representatives watched, said Duke Blackwood, executive director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley.

Reagan's widow, Nancy, and his three surviving children had left hours earlier following a Friday night sunset ceremony.

In his second tribute in two

days, President Bush on Saturday called Reagan a "modest son of America."

"Ronald Reagan always told us that for America, our best was yet to come," Bush said in his weekly radio address. "We know that is true for him, too. His work is done."

A headstone of Georgian gray granite was to be set up at the memorial site above the crypt, where an inscription from Reagan himself is set into a curved wall adorned with shrubbery and ivy.

"I know in my heart that man is good. That what is right will always eventually triumph. And there's purpose and worth to each and every life," the inscription reads.

Reagan first used the words while opening the library in 1991.

Former President Bush marks b-day

HOUSTON (AP)—A baseball park full of high-powered friends celebrated former President George H.W. Bush's 80th birthday Saturday night, part of a weekend of festivities to be topped with a skydive Sunday.

About 5,200 people, including former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, former British Prime Minister John Major and celebrities and sports figures such as Dennis Miller and Pete Sampras, wished Bush a happy birthday at Houston's Minute Maid Park.

When Bush's oldest son, President Bush, and his wife, Laura, were introduced, the audience loudly applauded and waved tiny American flags.

When his parents joined him on stage, the nation's 41st president put his arm around the 43rd president's shoulders and gave him a swift slap on the back.

"I want to thank you for coming to wish our dad a happy

birthday. Most of you are here because over the years you have come to know and love our dad," President Bush told the crowd. "He has touched you because of his decency and warmth, his humility and humor.

You know what we know. We are fortunate to have George Bush as a part of our lives."

The celebration came a day after former President Ronald Reagan was buried in California.



Bush

cda auction

pic volleyball

Students found apathetic about politics



STORM CHASERS
Unidentified storm chasers watch a tornado form just south of Wichita, Kan., Saturday, June 12, 2004. The tornado went on to damage homes in the nearby town of Mulvane.

daiichi fathers day
+p213

SEASIDE, Calif. (AP)—Most college students doubt that voting in presidential elections will make major changes in American society, according to a nationwide survey.

Only 35 percent of the students surveyed said presidential voting will create “a lot of change,” compared to 47 percent who thought so in March 2001, according to the poll conducted for the Leon and Sylvia Panetta Institute, a public-policy think tank at the California State University, Monterey Bay.

The survey also found that only 19 percent of American college students believe that politics is “very relevant” to their lives, and 43 percent believe that politics has little or no relevance.

“Somehow the message isn’t getting through,” said Leon Panetta, the institute’s director and former chief of staff to President Clinton.

Despite pressing issues such as the economy and the war in Iraq, students often are turned off by politics, Panetta said.

“Obviously, candidates, educators and all the rest of us need to do a better job of promoting political and civic involvement if we hope to restore trust in our democracy,” he said.

The survey, released by the institute Wednesday, was conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates. The poll consisted of 800 telephone interviews from April 28 to May 2 with students at four-year institutions around the country. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

Of those questioned, 42 percent said they supported likely Democratic nominee John Kerry in the upcoming presidential race, while 30 percent backed President Bush, 24 percent were undecided and 4 percent supported independent candidate Ralph Nader.

Other findings of the survey:

- Students rate the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks as more important in the nation’s history than the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the 1929 stock market crash or the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.
- Student support for the Bush administration’s approach to the war on terrorism has dropped from 57 percent in April 2002 to 37 percent. But half of students still believed the United States was right in taking military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power.
- Three out of four students oppose reviving the military draft.
- Students are evenly divided on the subject of same-sex marriage.

Interrogators hired for Iraq despite ban

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Army hired private interrogators to work in Iraq and Afghanistan despite the service’s policy of barring contractors from military intelligence jobs such as interrogating prisoners.

A policy memo from December 2000 says letting private workers gather military intelligence would jeopardize national security. An Army spokeswoman said senior commanders have the authority to override the contractor ban.

Some of the dozens of private contractors hired to interrogate prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan are under investigation in connection with abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad and other prisons. Army investigators are looking into whether the contracts were awarded properly.

The Abu Ghraib case also stirred criticism from some Democrats that the Pentagon was relying too heavily on private contractors, even for military functions such as collecting intelligence.

Thomas White, who quit as Army secretary last year after clashing with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, said he opposed hiring contractors to question prisoners.

“The principle that should be applied is that the basic process of interrogation and oversight of prisoners should be kept in-house, on the Army side,” White said in a telephone interview. “That’s something that would have to be under the direct supervision of the Army.”

Army spokeswoman Lt. Col. Pamela Hart said Saturday that the contractor ban remains in effect. The policy allows for hiring private interrogators and interpreters if there are not enough of those specialists in the Army.

“Commanders on the ground may use their discretion,” Hart said.



Bishops to discuss clergy sex abuse

In a private retreat this week, U.S. Roman Catholic bishops will discuss some internal church rifts that have become uncomfortably public—over the clergy sex abuse crisis and, separately, Holy Communion and politics.

Bishops disagree on whether Catholic lawmakers at odds with church teaching should receive the sacrament. They’ve sparked a national debate on the issue as a Catholic who supports abortion rights—John Kerry—is poised to become the Democratic nominee for president.

The bishops also will decide whether to override the objections of some U.S. church leaders and authorize a second round of audits of American dioceses—reviews that are aimed at determining whether the dioceses are doing enough to combat the molestation scandal.

Boston parade celebrates gay marriage

BOSTON (AP)—Court approval of same-sex marriage gave extra flair Saturday to the Boston Pride gay and lesbian parade, where men and women gyrated in tuxedos and wedding gowns atop floats and an oom-pah band played “Chapel of Love.”

The crowd, which police estimated at between 50,000 and 100,000, grabbed necklaces and trinkets thrown from floats that crept from Copley Square to the Common.

The 34th annual march, which organizers call New England’s largest, came almost a month after gay marriage became legal on May 17, following a ruling from the state’s highest court last year that denying marriage rights to gays and lesbians violated their civil rights.

Few protesters were to be seen. At the end of the march route, a man standing on a footstool on a traffic island held aloft a large placard reading, “Homo sex is sin. Turn to Jesus and be born again.” Young people stood around him, taunting him and chanting, holding up a rainbow flag to obscure his sign.

Sniper killed by deputies in California

IRVINE, Calif. (AP)—A sniper opened fire Saturday at a rural Southern California recycling center, wounding a worker and a deputy, then fled before being killed hours later in a shootout after deputies spotted him from a helicopter.

The helicopter pilot was wounded in the leg, but all three victims were expected to survive, Orange County sheriff’s spokesman Jim Amormino said.

The sniper, a middle-aged man wearing green, Army-style fatigues, began firing at employees at the Baker Canyon Green Recycling Center about 11:10 a.m., Amormino said.

One recycling worker was shot in the arm and a responding deputy, identified as Jerry Larson, was shot in the arm and in the shoulder, Amormino said. The shooting victims were taken to a hospital, but their conditions were not immediately available.

Asia

US kills 80 in 3-week Afghan offensive

By **STEPHEN GRAHAM**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—In the bloodiest fighting this year, U.S. Marines killed more than 80 insurgents in a three-week offensive against a Taliban stronghold in the mountains of southern Afghanistan, the military said Saturday.

The U.S. military insisted the battle was a victory that will help secure fall elections—rather than a sign of the resilience of Taliban-led militants.

Two Marines were wounded

in the fighting, the military said.

“The Marines have been aggressive, relentless and successful,” U.S. military spokesman Lt. Col. Tucker Mansager said. “They have demonstrated that there is no refuge for the terrorists.”

Some 2,000 Marines were sent to Afghanistan this spring, swelling the U.S.-dominated force to 20,000—its largest yet—in an attempt to put rebels on the defensive ahead of September elections.

Militants have stepped up their own operations, feeding a

spiral of violence that has left more than 450 people dead across the country this year.

Troops elsewhere had come under rocket and mortar fire several times in recent days but suffered no casualties, Mansager said.

In another operation, U.S. troops on Friday detained an expert bombmaker about 40 miles south of Kabul, Mansager said. He described the suspect as a “medium-value target” but declined to give more details.

The U.S. military and international peacekeepers based in

Kabul have warned since last year that militants are increasingly using the kind of roadside bombs that have proved so deadly in Iraq.

Seven U.S. servicemen have been killed in southern Afghanistan since early May—including four when a mine ripped through their Humvee—and dozens of Afghan soldiers have died in the region this year.

The Marines are based in Uruzgan Province, the home of fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Omar, and have called in warplanes to pound a large group of

militants in nearby mountains.

Most of the fighting has been near Daychopan, in neighboring Zabul province, a rerun of clashes last summer that left more than 100 militants and one American special operations soldier dead.

Mansager said the Marines’ offensive was allowing regular Army troops to focus on building ties with local communities across the troubled border region.

Commanders hope this approach, which includes millions of dollars in reconstruction aid,

will persuade villagers and tribes to turn against the militants and provide intelligence.

It also is supposed to help safeguard the elections.

The United Nations has registered nearly one-third of the estimated 10 million voters but has yet to send voter registration teams into the most hostile areas.

Eleven rockets were fired at a convoy of U.N., government and American military officials in a lawless region near the Pakistani border on Friday, injuring no one.

Pakistani troops moving closer to al-Qaida group

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistani troops backed by helicopter gunships and fighter jets searched the mountains, skirmishing with militants Saturday as they closed in on a cluster of suspected al-Qaida hideouts and a training facility near the Afghan border.

A U.S. military official said American forces in Afghanistan were closely following the action in the remote, tribal part of Pakistan and were ready to move against any militants who attempted to flee across the border.

The four-day-old offensive focuses on three al-Qaida-linked compounds—a training facility, a safehouse and the home of an alleged terror financier—near the town of Shakai, about 15 miles west of Wana, the largest town in South Waziristan.

A day earlier, Pakistani forces used artillery and helicopter gunships against rebels near Shakai. Casualties from Friday’s fighting were not known, but officials have said 35 insurgents were killed Wednesday and Thursday.

Troops aided by helicopters and fighter jets searched for militants in mountains near Shakai on Saturday, Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan told The Associated Press in the capital Islamabad. No arrests were reported.

Sultan said Pakistani troops and the militants exchanged sporadic gun fire throughout the day Saturday. There was no word on new casualties, but a security official said on condition of anonymity that Pakistani forces met little opposition.

Rehmatullah Yargul Khel, a tribal elder living in Wana, told AP by telephone that they see planes and helicopters flying toward Shakai and hear artillery booms coming from the area.

Residents say a number of civilians have been killed, with mud homes leveled and many people forced to flee, but Sultan said he had no information about any civilian casualties.

Skirmishes between Pakistani government soldiers and militants began Wednesday when rebels attacked a checkpoint, killing 15 security personnel.

Kashmir grenade attack kills 4

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—Suspected rebels threw a grenade into a crowded tourist restaurant Saturday in Indian-controlled Kashmir, killing four people and injuring 25 others, mostly tourists, police said.

The grenade blast triggered off an explosion of a cooking gas canister in the popular Poornima restaurant in Pahalgam, a holiday resort, adding to the casualties, said Saifuddin, a local police officer, who uses only one name.

The dead included two tourists, including a six-year-old girl, and two of the restaurant’s cooks. Police were waiting to inform their families before making their identities known.

Al-Nasireen, little known rebel group, claimed responsibility for the restaurant attack in a phone call to a local news agency, Current News Service.

The scenic restaurant was

crowded with tourists when the explosion occurred, said Saifuddin.

Pahalgam is about 60 miles southwest of Srinagar, the summer capital of India’s Jammu-Kashmir state.

Earlier Saturday, a hand grenade thrown by a suspected Islamic rebel at an army vehicle in a border town missed its target and exploded, wounding 20 civilians, four of them critically, police said.

The blast occurred in Handwara, a town close to the Line of Control which divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan, said Altaf Khan, a local police officer.

Police blamed the attack on Islamic militants fighting for Kashmir’s independence from India or its merger with neighboring Pakistan. More than 65,000 people have been killed in the conflict since 1989.

nmhc plumeria housing

RP blast mars Independence Day festivities

JOLO, Philippines (AP)—A bomb exploded in a town plaza in the southern Philippines ahead of Independence Day celebrations Saturday, killing an explosives expert who was trying to defuse it, in an attack authorities blamed on Muslim extremists seeking to disrupt the festivities.

The blast also injured a soldier and a police officer who were keeping a crowd away from the device in Plaza Rizal in Jolo town. Residents had found the homemade bomb early Saturday in a black plastic bag at a plaza gate, close to a popular restaurant, and alerted authorities, who sent an army bomb squad to defuse it.

Brig. Gen. Gabriel Habacon, head of an anti-terrorist task force in Jolo, said intelligence reports had indicated the Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf group planned to set off a bomb during the town's Independence Day celebrations.

Authorities already had decided to transfer the main celebrations planned for the plaza to a municipal hall compound. The festivities commemorate a 1898 declaration of independence from colonial power Spain.

The bomb, fashioned from an 81-mm mortar shell, is similar to those manufactured by Muslim separatists and the Abu Sayyaf, which is active in Jolo, military spokesman Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said.

He said the bomb was "probably remote-controlled."

Witnesses said a sergeant from the bomb disposal team was cutting wires attached to the device when it exploded. His body parts were strewn across the street.



Shrapnel hit the air force soldier and police officer who were trying keep onlookers away from the site, the witnesses said.

The airman was flown to a military hospital in the nearby port city of Zamboanga and the police officer was taken to a local hospital, Lucero said. The airman suffered chest wounds and the police officer was hit in the head, doctors said.

Earlier this month, a suspected Abu Sayyaf member was arrested with bomb-making materials, including 81-mm mortar shells.

Naval intelligence agents arrested the suspect, Alzhezar Jila, following a tip-off from an informant who claimed the Abu Sayyaf planned to bomb a ferry between Jolo and Zamboanga.

The Abu Sayyaf has been blamed for several bomb attacks. The group also has claimed that it bombed a ferry off Manila that caught fire after an explosion on Feb. 27, killing more than 100 people.

Police have arrested the alleged ferry bomber, but investigators have found no forensic evidence backing the guerrillas' claim.

Jolo is about 950 kilometers (590 miles) south of Manila.

A helicopter drops confetti as cadets from the Philippine Military Academy carry the big flag signaling the start of the country's celebration of its 106th Independence Day Saturday, June 12, 2004 in Manila, Philippines. The country declared independence from Spanish colonialism 106 years ago but soon became an American colony and was not formally granted self-rule until 1946.

AP

Hooded Thai assailants slash school guard

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Hooded assailants with assault rifles slashed the throat of a night guard outside a government school in Thailand's Muslim south and seized weapons from other security personnel who were inside, police said Friday.

The guard, Abdulnasae Ka-toolae, 42, was in serious condition after the attack Thursday night at the school in a rural part of Pattani province, police Lt. Col. Sophon Phansomtrong said.

The assailants were believed to be Muslim separatists who have been blamed for attacks in Pattani and two other southern provinces, Narathiwat and Yala. The provinces are the only Muslim-majority areas in predominantly Buddhist Thailand.

The volunteer guards, drawn from local villages, were supposed to be protecting the school from arson attacks, he said. Dozens of state schools have been set on fire in recent months by the insurgents, and the government has been arming volunteers to help provide security in remote villages.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra met for more than three hours with top security officials on Friday and said his government would become more aggressive in efforts to curb violence in the Muslim-dominated south.

"The protection will still be in place but we will rearrange our forces in a more aggressive way, including patrolling, checkpoints, and hunting them down," he said. "The aggressive approach means patrolling, combing through areas and not just sitting and waiting for an attack."

At least 284 people have been killed in the violence since January, including 107 militants who were shot by security forces April 28.

Most of the other victims have been police, government officials, village leaders and teachers from the Buddhist community.

A separatist movement has simmered for decades in southern Thailand. It died down in the late 1980s following a government amnesty for the militants but resurfaced two years ago and became a serious problem this year after a raid on an army arsenal Jan. 4 that left four soldiers dead.

Thailand's minority Muslims complain of discrimination in jobs and education by the central government, and accuse it of cultural insensitivity.

Sophon said five or six men dressed in military fatigues, their faces covered with hoods, first cut the throat of the guard, a Muslim, outside the school, then barged into a room where five civil defense volunteers were watching television. The attackers tied them up and took away their three shotguns and a pistol, he said.

GMA urges Congress to speed up vote count

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo urged the Philippine Congress on Saturday to speed up its tabulation of votes in last month's presidential election, and assailed "politicians without conscience" for delaying the count.

Unofficial counts and an exit poll showed Arroyo beating her main rival, movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., and three other candidates in the May 10 elections. Her vice presidential running mate, Sen. Noli de Castro,

also won, but the opposition has accused her administration of massive cheating in the polls.

The official tabulation by Congress, which has to proclaim the new president and vice president by June 30, has been delayed by debates, often triggered by opposition questioning of vote records.

"These past weeks, I have been fervently praying so that God would give enlightenment not only to me but also to our people and to all our leaders,"

Arroyo said in an Independence Day speech.

"I continue to pray for unity and reconciliation, and—as for the call of the times—a speedy count and a lawful decision," she said. "Let us not allow the count to become an opportunity to obstruct or derail our democratic processes from the right path."

Arroyo spoke before the annual military and civic Independence Day parade at the seaside Rizal Park.

The Philippines declared inde-

pendence from Spanish colonialism 106 years ago. The country, however, soon became an American colony and was not formally granted self-rule until 1946.

It was Arroyo's first major speech since the election. She has avoided press interviews, and unlike Poe, has not personally claimed victory at the polls.

"I have strong faith that our people have made the right decision," she said. "However, there are a few politicians without conscience who will not

stop until they win the election by whatever means."

Opposition legislators deny purposely delaying the count, saying they merely want to scrutinize vote records to determine the real winner instead of leaving the victor under a cloud of doubt.

The military and police, on alert against terrorist threats and rumors of a "destabilization plot" by the opposition, threw a tight security net around Rizal Park's Quirino Grandstand, where Saturday's parade took place.

One killed in bomb explosion in Pakistan

MULTAN, Pakistan (AP)—A powerful bomb exploded outside the home of a senior security official in central Pakistan on Saturday, killing one person and wounding three, police and doctors said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast outside the home of Ghani-ur-Rahman, the commander of Frontier Constabulary in Dere Ismail Khan, 180 miles southwest of Pakistan's capital Islamabad.

It was not immediately clear whether Rahman was at home when the blast occurred, but

police said he was not among the injured.

"I confirm that two security guards of Ghani-ur-Rahman and a passerby was injured in the bomb explosion," Ullah told The Associated Press.

He said a man who died in the blast was a clerk in a government office, and he was crossing a road outside the residence of Rahman when the bomb exploded.

Dera Ismil Khan is not far away from a tribal region where security and intelligence officials suspect Taliban and al-Qaida fugitives might be hiding.

Japan decides list for children's names

TOKYO (AP)—Ever considered naming a baby Beetle or Sardine? How about Cancer or Dung, or even Who? Those were a few of the 578 additional Japanese characters the Justice Ministry said Friday it might allow parents to use in names for children.

Parents in Japan like others around the world agonize over the naming of a child. But with tens of thousands of Japanese characters to choose from, the possibilities would seem limitless.

That's exactly what the gov-

ernment wants to avoid.

"The average person can only read and write between 2,000 to 3,000 characters. The government made the law because it would be too inconvenient not to be able to read people's names," Justice Ministry official Yoshikazu Nemura said.

Tokyo first imposed name restrictions just after World War II ended. Periodically, the list has been revised to reflect changes in the lexicon.

Japanese law now confines names to a list of 2,232 charac-

ters. A child whose name contains a banned character can't be entered in the family register, an official document required for all Japanese nationals.

Most names connote certain traits: fortitude and strength for men; grace and beauty for women. But unusual names have been on the rise in recent years, as parents opt for originality over tradition.

Nemura said recent revisions have sought to lengthen the list, with the most recent changes, in 1990, adding 118 characters.

World

Al-Qaida claims US slaying and hostage

By DONNA ABU-NASR
AP WRITER

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—Suspected militants killed an American in the Saudi capital on Saturday, shooting him in the back as he parked in his home garage, and the U.S. Embassy said it was searching for an American who was missing.

A purported al-Qaida statement posted on an Islamic Web site late Saturday claimed the terror group had killed one American and kidnapped another in Riyadh. It threatened to treat the captive as U.S. troops treated Iraqi prisoners.

The slaying and apparent abduction were the latest attacks in a campaign of anti-Western violence in the kingdom, believed by many to be aimed at driving out foreigners as a way to sabotage the vital Saudi oil sector.

The U.S. Embassy identified the dead man as Kenneth Scroggs. It did not identify the missing American but said it was working with Saudi officials to find him.

Scroggs was the third Westerner killed in the kingdom in a week. Several Islamic Web



Two contract truck drivers—Victor Tawfiq Jerges of Egypt, left, and Bulent Yanik of Turkey—sit in front of a group of men who are holding them hostage at an undisclosed location in this photo released Saturday, June 12, 2004.

sites Saturday carried links to a videotape—also purportedly from al-Qaida—that claims to show the killing of American Robert Jacobs, who was shot at his Riyadh home Tuesday.

In the kidnapping claim, the al-Qaida statement showed a passport-size photo of a brown-haired man and a Lockheed Martin business card bearing

the name Paul M. Johnson. It said he was born in 1955.

The mobile phone listed on the card was switched off, and a call to a second phone number was picked up by a voicemail message by a deep-voiced man who identified himself as Paul Johnson.

The statement said the terror group would deal with Johnson

Gunmen kill Iraqi deputy foreign minister

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)—Gunmen firing from a car killed Iraq’s deputy foreign minister Saturday in the first assassination of a senior official since the new interim government was announced this month. Iraqi authorities blamed Saddam Hussein loyalists.

Bassam Salih Kubba, 60, the slain minister, was Iraq’s most senior career diplomat and was slated to stay on in the new administration that takes over after June 30 from the U.S.-led occupation authority.

Kubba was mortally wounded when gunmen drove up behind his car in the city’s Azimiyah district and opened

fire, Foreign Ministry spokesman Thamir al-Adhami said.

The assailants then passed the stricken vehicle and fired a second time, the spokesman said. Kubba’s driver escaped injury, but Kubba died in a hospital.

Azimiyah is a predominantly Sunni Muslim neighborhood where Saddam took refuge as American forces overran the city in April 2003 and support for the former regime runs strong there.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the attack “bears all the hallmarks of leftover supporters of Saddam Hussein’s evil regime.”

Kubba was the second senior

Iraqi figure to be killed in the last three weeks and the first since U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi appointed the new leadership to take power June 30.

Izzadine Saleem, who at the time headed the now-disbanded Iraqi Governing Council, was killed May 17 in a suicide car-bombing near the entrance to the heavily fortified Green Zone headquarters of the American-run occupation authority.

Ten days later, gunmen ambushed the convoy of another Governing Council member, Salama al-Khafaji, south of Baghdad, killing her son and her chief bodyguard.

just as “the Americans dealt with our brothers in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib”—a reference to sexual and other alleged abuses of Iraqi and Muslim prisoners by U.S. troops.

The statement also said Johnson is one of four experts in Saudi Arabia working on developing Apache helicopter systems and that the American

killed worked in the same industry. It did not identify the slain American but said he was killed at his house.

“Everybody knows that these helicopters are used by the Americans, their Zionist allies and the apostates to kill Muslims, terrorizing them and displacing them in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq,” said the statement.

It said al-Qaida would release a videotape later to show Johnson’s confessions and list its demands.

A Lockheed Martin spokesman confirmed that Johnson was a Lockheed employee but declined to say what his job was. The spokesman also said Lockheed Martin was not aware of any employees who had been killed in Saudi Arabia.

nmhc survey

cda workshop

Saudi report links al-Qaida to slay plot

By ABDULLAH AL-SHIHRI
AP WRITER

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—Government-owned newspapers Saturday condemned an alleged Libyan plot to kill Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, and one paper said four al-Qaida militants recruited to carry out the assassination had been arrested.

There was no official confirmation of the arrests, reported on the front page of the pan-Arab Asharq al-Awsat newspaper known for its close links to the Saudi royal family.

Quoting "reliable sources," paper said the militants were arrested at a hotel in Mecca and had been recruited by Col. Mohamed Ismael, a Libyan intelligence officer currently in Saudi custody who reportedly provided Saudi investigators with the details of the plot.

"Al-Qaida is ready to ally with the devil to execute its plots inside Saudi Arabia," the paper said.

The kingdom's top cleric also condemned the plot.

"Islamic law is against such acts because assassinations are criminal acts ... that reflect

treason," Sheikh Abdul-Aziz bin Al al-Sheik was quoted as telling the Okaz daily newspaper in an interview. "Assassinating officials and killing the innocent is a sin, a great sin."

U.S. media quoted unidentified sources as saying Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi had ordered Abdullah's assassination. Libyan Foreign Minister Abdel Rahman Shalqam has denied the reports. President Bush said Thursday that U.S. investigators were trying to establish whether there was such a plot.

Al-Sheik urged trials for any

plotters and said all Muslims had a duty to denounce such acts.

In its editorial, Okaz said the conspiracy "has become a source of unity and solidarity for us (Saudis)."

The newspaper accused Gadhafi of "undermining every Arab effort aimed at strengthening the (Arab) nation's unity." It also ran a caricature of Gadhafi with a poem underneath it saying he is "draped in shame" and warning that an attempt to kill Saudi leaders could lead to war.

Al-Yawm newspaper, an Arabic-language daily, ran an

editorial in which it said the allegation of a Libyan plot caught everyone by surprise.

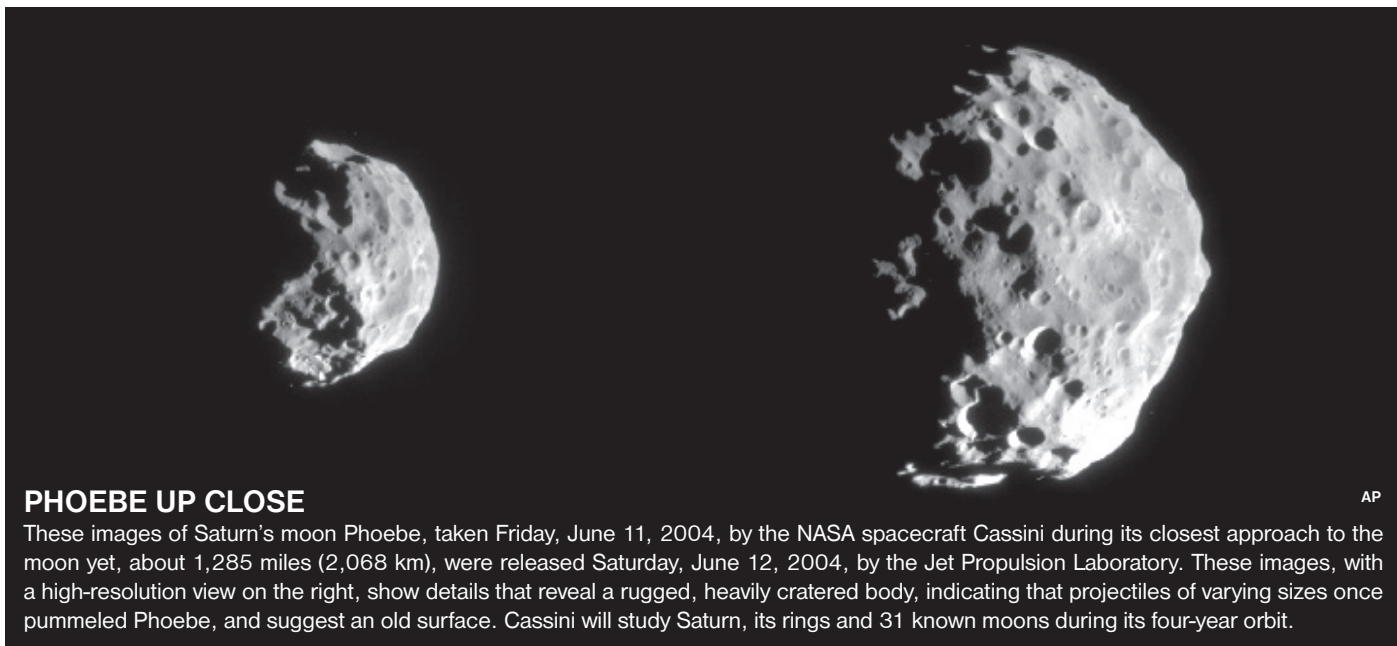
"It confirmed that terrorism is not only confined to a deviant bunch, but also seems to include leaders who are more deviant," the paper said. The "deviant bunch" is one of many euphemisms Saudi authorities have been using to describe terrorists who have carried out recent attacks in the kingdom.

Al-Yawm added that Gadhafi's 35 years of rule have been "marred by confusion and conspiracy."

The United States continues to

list Libya as a state sponsor of terrorism, but relations between the two countries have improved since Libya agreed in December to dismantle its biological, chemical and nuclear weapons programs.

A heated public exchange of insults between Gadhafi and Abdullah at an Arab summit last year showed the severity of their troubled relations and resulted in Libya's withdrawal of its ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Gadhafi accused the Saudis of allowing U.S. troops to enter Arab lands, while Abdullah called Gadhafi an agent for the Americans.



PHOEBE UP CLOSE

These images of Saturn's moon Phoebe, taken Friday, June 11, 2004, by the NASA spacecraft Cassini during its closest approach to the moon yet, about 1,285 miles (2,068 km), were released Saturday, June 12, 2004, by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. These images, with a high-resolution view on the right, show details that reveal a rugged, heavily cratered body, indicating that projectiles of varying sizes once pummeled Phoebe, and suggest an old surface. Cassini will study Saturn, its rings and 31 known moons during its four-year orbit.

Iran rejects restraint on nuclear program

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Toughening its stance in advance of a meeting of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency, Iran on Saturday said it would reject international restrictions on its nuclear program and challenged the world to accept Tehran as a member of the "nuclear club."

Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi rejected further outside influence on Tehran's nuclear ambitions two days before the International Atomic Energy Agency board of governors meets to discuss Iran's highly controversial program.

"We won't accept any new

obligations," Kharrazi said. "Iran has a high technical capability and has to be recognized by the international community as a member of the nuclear club. This is an irreversible path."

Iran has repeatedly insisted its nuclear program is geared toward generating electricity, not making weapons, but the United States and its allies say Tehran has a secret nuclear weapons program. The IAEA has wrestled with the dilemma for more than a year.

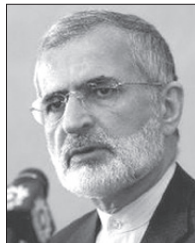
Iran has already suspended uranium enrichment and stopped building centrifuges. It

has also allowed IAEA inspections of its nuclear facilities without prior notice, part of the additional protocol to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty that still must be approved by parliament.

Kharrazi insisted that Iran would not give up its development of the nuclear fuel cycle, the steps for processing and enriching uranium necessary for both nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Iran says it has achieved the full cycle, but

is not now enriching uranium.

"That somebody demands that we give up the nuclear fuel cycle ... is an additional demand," Kharrazi said, apparently referring to demands by U.S. and European countries that Iran halt operations of a plant it inaugurated in March in Isfahan, central Iran, that processes uranium into gas. The demand also calls for aborting plans to build a heavy water reactor in Arak, another city in central Iran.



Kharrazi

US general: Fallujah goals not achieved

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP)—More than a month after the Fallujah siege, a senior U.S. military officer acknowledged Saturday that the Americans had not achieved their goals in the restive Sunni Muslim city, now in the hands of hardline clerics and fighters who held off the Marines.

"There's still a long way to go in Fallujah before the coalition—and for that matter the Iraqi government—can be satisfied that we have brought Fallujah to resolution," Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, the coalition deputy operations chief, told reporters.

Ten Marines and hundreds of Iraqis, many of them civilians, died during more than three weeks of fighting, which un-

leashed a firestorm of criticism among Iraqis, foreign governments and even America's coalition allies.

The siege ended with the Marines saying they were "re-positioning" and turning control over to the Fallujah Brigade, made up of officers from Saddam Hussein's army and some of the same insurgents who had held off the Marines.

Although the city itself is relatively quiet, the surrounding area remains a major center of Sunni resistance to the occupation. Late Saturday, a U.S. military convoy was ambushed on the main road north of Fallujah, and a U.S. Humvee was on fire, according to a local resident, Wessam Ali.

Congo says still hunting coup leader

KINSHASA, Congo (AP)—Congo's government said Saturday it was hunting the leader of a failed coup after the renegade presidential guard fled south of the capital, chased by army vehicles and helicopters.

President Joseph Kabila's administration dismissed opposition allegations that it had exaggerated or even faked the coup attempt as an excuse to clamp down ahead of next year's elections.

Forces loyal to Kabila routed soldiers led by Maj. Eric Lenge on Friday, after the renegade presidential guard commandeered state radio to announce he was "neutral-

izing" Kabila's transitional government.

"We are continuing to chase Eric Lenge," Deputy Information Minister Simon Tshitenge told The Associated Press. "We will capture him."

Kinshasa was rocked by the sound of booming artillery early Friday, as the rebellious presidential guards fought Kabila loyalists, according to diplomats and witnesses.

The coup attempt was the latest in a sudden spate of trouble for Kabila's 14-month-old power-sharing government, established to end a 1998-2002 war which aid workers said left 3.3 million dead.

In Sicily, 30 mobsters get life in prison

PALERMO, Sicily (AP)—A court convicted and sentenced 30 top Sicilian mobsters to life imprisonment after a 10-year trial covering a total of 77 murders.

Some of those convicted Friday were already imprisoned, including the former "boss of bosses" Salvatore "Totò" Riina. Also sentenced was longtime fugitive Bernardo Provenzano, believed to now hold the top post in the Sicilian Mafia.

"Fortunately, the state, when it's well organized and when it pays attention to the Mafia, can do justice," prosecutor Gioacchino Natoli told the TG3 television news.

Among the victims in the killings, committed from 1981-91, was Palermo entrepreneur Libero Grassi, who was slain for refusing to pay extortion money. Grassi's bravery in challenging the Mafia won his case wide attention.

In addition to the 30 life sentences, four mobsters received sentences from 10 to 13 years. Twelve people were found not guilty.

The Corleone gang, which Riina ran until his arrest in 1993, was Italy's most notorious and violent, carrying out numerous bloody acts in the 1980s and early '90s.

European parliament elections continue

ROME (AP)—In voting for the European Parliament, Italians cast ballots Saturday, with their government's pro-U.S. stance weighing on their minds. Voters in the Czech Republic, Ireland and Latvia showed impatience with their leaders, handing victories to opposition parties.

Latvians, Maltese and Czechs were voting for the first time since becoming members of an enlarged European Union on May 1. Italians will have a second day Sunday to cast ballots.

Citizens crowded the polls on the tiny island of Malta, but turnout was relatively low in Latvia, in part because of discontent in the Baltic nation with higher prices since entering the EU.

"Latvia joined the EU six weeks ago and the news thus far has been mostly negative," said Latvian political commentator Karlis Streips. "Fuel has gotten more expensive, movie tickets have gotten a lot more expensive and that may have turned a lot of people off."

The 25-nation election began Thursday in Britain and the Netherlands and runs through Sunday. The voting is to choose members of the 732-delegate European Parliament, but the results are often read as a test of voters sentiment about their national governments as much as about the union.

Italy car crash kills three US sailors

NAPLES, Italy (AP)—Three U.S. Navy sailors were killed and two suffered serious injuries in a car crash in this southern Italian city early Saturday, a naval official said.

The cause of the accident was not immediately clear, spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Lisa Braun said. U.S. naval and Italian authorities were investigating.

Five people were aboard the vehicle when it flipped over on the road and burst into flames early Saturday morning, Braun said.

Another U.S. sailor in a different car pulled over and helped rescue the two who survived the crash. They suffered second-degree burns and were being treated at a local hospital, Braun said. The sailor who helped rescue them suffered minor injuries, she said.

Braun said the sailors, based around Naples, were on liberty at the time of the accident, but it was not immediately clear where they had been or were headed at the time of the crash.

The ANSA news agency said speeding was probably the cause, and that the car had lost control and crashed.

The identities of the sailors were not immediately released.

Health & Fitness

PSS015

HUMANITIES

Life & Style

Men, sports and that elusive closure

Guys are mean. I'm thinking of one guy in particular. No need to mention his name. He broke my heart into several million pieces. He never actually broke up with me in so many words. That part bothered me. It was, for me, worse than actually hearing the words "I'm dumping you."

It's just as well because he has been making his presence felt of late. If you can believe it, he continues to reject me everyday, long after it's been over. It makes no difference that the incessant rejection is more imaginary than real. See, it happens in my dreams. Lately, I've been bombarded with this image of him sitting on his comfy sofa in his shorts carousing with his friends. They're chatting about sports against the backdrop of his huge living room television tuned into—what else—the sports channel. It's halftime and the guys engage in a little conversation to kill time before the game comes on again. And then there's that moment there when he goes moving his head from side to side at the mere mention of my name. I don't flatter myself that he and his friends actually talk about me because I have it on good authority (from a trusted heterosexual male friend) that guys don't talk about girls when they hang out. I'm told that the rare times they do, it only lasts two

seconds. And even then, it's only to confirm or deny something. And then they move on to another topic. Back to my recurring dream. It's always the same scene over and over. He and his buddies from work are drinking beer inside his apartment on a Friday night. With both legs slumped on the center table, he shakes his head in response to whether he was, for a minute, serious about me. Try to be meaner, why don't you. And he doesn't even show a hint of remorse. Then he quickly goes back to watching his sports.

I have a theory about single guys and sports. They're married. They don't tell you this but Sports and every guy claiming to be single in your area have already tied the knot a long time ago, in a secret ceremony back in sports camp when they were probably, I don't know, 7. You don't see the ring but the manifestation is there if you look closely enough. Men are committed to be with Sports at all costs. Even when they go out on dates with real women,

Sports is on their mind. They think about Sports. They make time for Sports. Men would clump up to see Sports and spend good money, too. They would even skip work or church to be with Sports. When they do eventually propose to the girl they're seeing, don't be fooled, its only to conform to the social expectation of settling down with a member of the opposite sex. Because if the norm dictated otherwise, men would rather stick it out with Sports. The women they marry actually become their second wives. And true to form, these women usually fall second to Sports. Until they have children. And the second wives are further relegated to being third in men's list of priorities.

I dated a guy (the same one who ripped my heart apart) who, I would say, was probably Sports truest soulmate. Their bond was just so amazing I often thought if only Hollywood movie director Gary Marshall would think to put their love story into film, it would do so much better at the box office than *Pretty Woman* did in its time. My former date's ardor for Sports was so pure and unconditional that it made me wish I could even just be half the person that Sports is.

But of course, I or women in general, can never be like Sports. Sports, with her badass spunk to win at every game; her reckless disregard for exclusivity in a relationship; or her drama-free take



on issues such as feminism, motherhood, marriage, shopping or raising children. Sports never has bad hair days. She never gains holiday weight or gets stretch marks. Sports maintains her lithe, athletic body. There clearly is no contest. I can never be like Sports. I've quit trying. So intense was my ex's amour for Sports that one day, when I called him up with the intention of begging him to break up with me and get it over with, all he could talk about was Sports and the fabulous time they had during the SuperBowl weekend. It's true. I tried to set the stage for him to walk out of my life as gracefully as he entered it by providing him the opportunity to appropriately say his goodbyes and explain why he decided (unilaterally) that we could not continue seeing each other anymore. He had stopped calling after our last date weeks before. So to save my own sanity, I took it upon myself to put a closure on the pending matter. As hard as I tried, I couldn't get him to blurt it out.

I don't know what hurts more: Being dumped in itself or knowing that I was stupid enough to fall for some die-hard sports fan who had no balls to tell it to me straight. Don't get me wrong. He

had more redeeming qualities than this. For one, he was a hard-working professional. Two, he was tall. Okay, in all fairness, except for his extraordinary ability to shut down in the middle of a highly emotional situation, he was a winner. Still, I can't shake off the feeling that I was cheated of my essential right as a woman (and the dumpee) to break down and scream profanity at him during what could have been our final breakup talk, simply, I guess, because he didn't think I deserved one. No matter what he thinks, I maintain that I am entitled! Not that I would've actually thrown a fit. I'm just saying I'd really like to have the option.

Even as I near the conclusion of this pathetic little sob story, I have yet to have that elusive closure. Although, I'm glad to note that putting this into writing has been some form of closure for me. If I had any point at all in writing this piece, it is that no good can be had from backing out of something that you know you need to do. My ex screwed up by not being honest as to why he could not see me anymore. He kept on putting off the discussion until it was moot to even have it. My mistake was not pressing him to provide me an explanation. Alas, here I am, still wondering...

'Pimp My Ride' puts new spin on makeovers

By MIKE HOUSEHOLDER
AP WRITER

DETROIT (AP)—Turn on a television set at any given time and something is being made over: a room (TLC's "Trading Spaces"), a house ("ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition") or even a human being (Fox's "The Swan"). But leave it to MTV—which ushered in the reality TV era more than a decade ago with "The Real World"—to put its own spin on the makeover show with "Pimp My Ride," a weekly series that transforms broken-down autos into tricked-out masterpieces.

The half-hour show, whose sea-

son finale airs Sunday at 9:30 p.m. EDT/PDT, has been a solid addition to MTV's lineup of original programming, consistently winning its time slot in the 12-to-34 demographic against basic cable competition.

Hosted by rapper and car enthusiast Xzibit and featuring Los Angeles-area aftermarket shop West Coast Customs, "Pimp My Ride" selects young, automotively challenged Southern Californians and transforms their jalopies into triumphs.

"Everybody has had a bucket in their life," said Xzibit, using L.A. slang for a clunker. He has had two of his own rides—a Hummer H2 and

a Mercedes-Benz S500—"pimped" at West Coast Customs.

Xzibit said the show owes much of its success to the element of charity.

"It never gets old seeing somebody do something positive for somebody else," Xzibit said in a telephone interview. "The show is in such sharp contrast to every other reality show. It kind of fits the formula, but it serves another purpose. There's something positive being done at the end of every show."

A typical episode begins with Xzibit paying a surprise visit to the viewer and humorously highlighting the car's numerous problem areas. Then it's off to West Coast Customs, where a team of

professionals disassembles the vehicle and completely refurbishes it with custom rims and paint, plush interiors and the latest in lighting, car audio and video accessories.

Believe it or not, there's more. Some of the special features vehicles have received include a ping-pong table in the bed of a 1985 Ford Ranger pickup truck, a motorized shoe rack in the trunk of a 1978 Cadillac Sedan DeVille and a remote-controlled digital camera in the passenger side visor so the owner of a 1989 Ford Mustang convertible could take pictures of her friends while driving.

Not only has the show been a winner

for the network, it also has been so for West Coast Customs, which has seen an upturn in business since the show's debut in March.

"It has opened the door to do other things," said founder and owner Ryan Friedlinghaus, whose rep for outfitting rides for stars like Los Angeles Lakers star Shaquille O'Neal and rappers Ludacris and 50 Cent helped it land the show.

Each show ends with the car owner triumphantly returning home to the oohs and aahs of friends and family.

"It's not just about the cars anymore," Xzibit said, but also "the boost that these kids get in their self-esteem. You can see it in their faces."

OBIT ANNA

Young dad's drinking takes precedence over his family

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I have a 9-month-old son and am expecting another child in three months. My husband, "Matt," works nights, so when I get home exhausted at the end of my workday, I care for our baby by myself.

Matt used to drink a lot, but he slowed down quite a bit when we got married. I still feel that alcohol rules his life because his idea of an evening out is getting drunk. If he has a day off, he spends it drinking, too.

On Matt's birthday, I took the baby and slept at my parents' house so he could have a party with the guys and get drunk. Because of my pregnancy I can't drink—nor do I want to—but I didn't want the baby there with a bunch of drunks, either.

Matt and I went to a sporting event together not too long ago. I was embarrassed because he left me sitting alone while he kept going off to buy more beer. Seven beers into the event he was stumbling over the other spectators in our row.

I hate living like this. He says I'm overreacting. Am I? Is this normal for a 26-year-old man? If it is, our marriage is doomed.

FED UP IN RICHMOND, TEXAS

DEAR FED UP: No, it's not normal for the average 26-year-old man. But it is typical of an alcoholic of any age.

It's important that you contact Al-Anon, a 12-step fellowship of people whose lives have been affected by the compulsive drinking of a family member or friend. To locate a chapter in your area, call 1-888-4ALANON (888-425-2666), or go to the Web site, which is www.al-anon.alateen.org.

Your husband's behavior won't change until he realizes he has a problem and wants to do something about it. Whether you want to spend the rest of your life this way is a question only you can answer. But please realize that a tendency toward alcoholism can be inherited, and be sure your children understand that fact as they grow older.

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend and I have been dating for almost two years, long-distance. We visit whenever possible and plan to live together soon. My problem is, he doesn't trust me. Although I have assured him that I am devoted to him and always have been, he continues to accuse me of seeing other guys. He says he has a "gut feeling" about it. He says I treat my friends, and even strangers, better than I do him. I don't feel that way.

I'm afraid to answer the phone or have contact with people for fear that he will get jealous because he's not the center of attention. He has read my e-mails more than once, checking for evidence. I suspect he may have hacked into my computer. Is there any hope?

INNOCENT AND FAITHFUL IN L.A.

DEAR INNOCENT AND FAITHFUL: No. If you are smart, you will KEEP your relationship with this young man long-distance. You have described a person who is potentially an abuser. His actions are obsessive and controlling. Even if you live together, you will never be able to fill the bottomless pit of his neediness and insecurity. My advice to you is to end the relationship.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)



Dear Abby

Ailing Combs leaves 'Raisin' performance

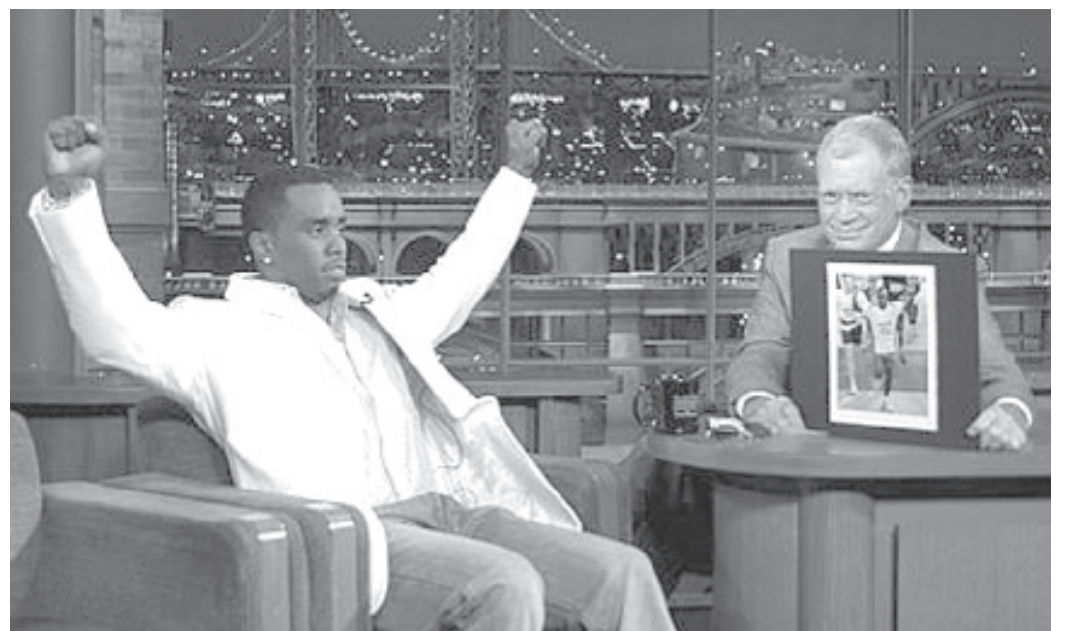
NEW YORK (AP)—Hip-hop music impresario and Broadway performer Sean "P. Diddy" Combs was forced to leave Saturday's matinee performance of "A Raisin in the Sun" because of a stomach ailment, a spokesman for the production said.

Bob Fennell said Combs, 34, showed up for the performance at the Royale Theatre complaining he felt ill, but he insisted on going on with the show. In the play, Combs plays the main character, Walter Lee Younger, a frustrated limousine driver.

"By intermission he was feeling very, very sick so the stage manager instructed him to go home," Fennell said. The matinee and evening shows went on with an understudy.

The cause of the ailment was not immediately known Saturday evening and producers did not know if Combs would be available for Sunday performances.

The 15-week Broadway re-



Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, left, mimics a photo of himself crossing the finish line at the 2003 New York Marathon, held by a smiling David Letterman during a taping of "Late Show with David Letterman," Friday, June 11, 2004, in New York.

vival of Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 play about a working-class Chicago family has been running since April 26. Although

Combs received mixed reviews, initial ticket sales broke the Royale Theatre record.

The play also stars Sanaa

Lathan, Audra McDonald and Phylicia Rashad. McDonald and Rashad recently won Tony awards for their performances.

Spears to launch new fragrance

NEW YORK (AP)—Pop star Britney Spears is a new crossover artist in the beauty business. The 22-year-old singer will launch a new fragrance, Curious, this fall. A blend of white flowers and vanilla-infused musk, the fragrance is part of a licensing agreement with Elizabeth Arden, the company announced Thursday.

Spears is a "talented, fashionable woman who appeals to a young and international consumer base," said Paul West, president of Elizabeth Arden, in a statement.

Packaging for Curious will feature two of Spears' favorite colors, pink and azure blue, and the bottle will be azure with heart-shaped charms.

A scented whipped body cream, shower gel and solid "shimmer stick" will debut in department stores in September, the company said.



Britney Spears performs during the second show of her 'Onyx Hotel Tour' Wednesday, March 3, 2004m at Glendale Arena in Glendale, Ariz.

Jackie Chan seeks to become 'true actor'

HONOLULU (AP)—Jackie Chan is attempting his most daring stunt ever: becoming what he calls a "true actor." Chan says he wants to shed his action star image in favor of meatier roles that require dialogue and emotion instead of punches and kicks.

"I want to change. I want to be like Robert DeNiro. I want to be Dustin Hoffman," said the big-screen star from Hong Kong. "I don't always want it to be like the old days. ... I want to change my image. I want to become an actor who can fight—not an action star."

At 50, the high-flying martial arts master says he'll probably do his own stunts for another five years. But a more serious image could provide some job security, he said.

"Even though I'm pretty

good, how long can I keep fighting?" he said. "Look at Robert DeNiro. Look at Clint Eastwood. They still can act."

Chan was in Hawaii promoting his latest film, "Around the World in 80 Days," which opens nationwide on Wednesday.



Actor Jackie Chan speaks to members of the media during a press conference announcing the opening of Jackie's Kitchen, his first restaurant endeavor in the United States, Wednesday, June 9, 2004, at Ala Moana Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Company claims DMX breached contract

NEW YORK (AP)—Rapper DMX, who growls and barks through most of his records, has landed in the legal doghouse with a company that claims he breached an agreement to promote its line of high-end doggie-wear.

Amusing Diversions Inc. alleged in court papers that when it signed a promotion agreement with DMX, whose real name is Earl Simmons, it was unaware of his involvement in dogfighting or his conviction on animal cruelty charges.

Agents for the 33-year-old rapper, who recorded the hit "Get at Me Dog," said in court papers that he had recorded "dog awareness" radio spots urging people to be kind to their animals. Those announcements reflected his "positive connection with dogs," they said.

But Amusing Diversions, in its filing this week in Manhattan's state Supreme Court, said his radio spots were "part of a community service obligation judicially imposed upon him" for animal cruelty.

DMX pleaded guilty to the cruelty charges in 2002 after officials found 14 pit bulls living in filthy conditions at his New Jersey home. He was fined and ordered to do the ads.

Lawyers for DMX did not immediately return calls Friday seeking comment.

Michael Rovell, lawyer for Amusing Diversions, said the company signed DMX last June and paid him \$15,000 to help sell leather jackets, bubble jackets with fur trim, sports jerseys and other high-end "urban" dog wear.

Rovell said Friday that DMX had done "nothing, not a thing" to support his end of the deal. He never mentioned the products during various TV appearances despite promises to do so, court papers say.

Pastimes
